

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

photo: NRCS Oklahoma

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

In 2000, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Oklahoma continued technical assistance to over 200 participants in the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, even though no appropriations of new cost-share funds were received. The Natural Resources Conservation Service continues to provide assistance to participants implementing over \$1 million in cost-share from previous years. These funds will help install practices resulting in an improvement of wildlife habitat on over 100,000 acres.

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program is a voluntary program that helps landowners develop and improve wildlife habitat on private lands. Interested landowners seek natural resource planning assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and other federal, state, and private organizations to develop conservation plans that improve wildlife habitat on land that is compatible for livestock use. Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program dollars help implement the actions identified in the plan. The compatibility of agriculture and wildlife programs benefits all.

Wildlife is one of Oklahoma's natural resource treasures; the interest of landowners in the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program and cooperation by

technical experts to implement the program are testimony to that fact. In 1998, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program provided just under \$1 million for habitat improvement. In 1999, the program provided over \$300,000 for financial assistance to landowners. While the program was not funded in fiscal year 2000, Oklahoma still has over \$1.5 million in applications on file needing additional funding.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program Applications

With financial assistance through the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program and technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and its partners, private landowners are restoring, enhancing and creating habitat for prairie chicken, bobwhite quail, white tail deer, wild turkey, bald eagles, and dozens of migratory grassland bird species. The restoration and protection of riparian areas are improving aquatic habitats for rare prairie fish, as well as, game fish like largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish. Threatened and endangered fish and wildlife species are benefiting through habitat improvement.

People participating in the program value quality fish and wildlife habitat, and are especially supportive of native grassland and riparian area restoration.

Wildlife Incentive Program (WHIP) Success Stories

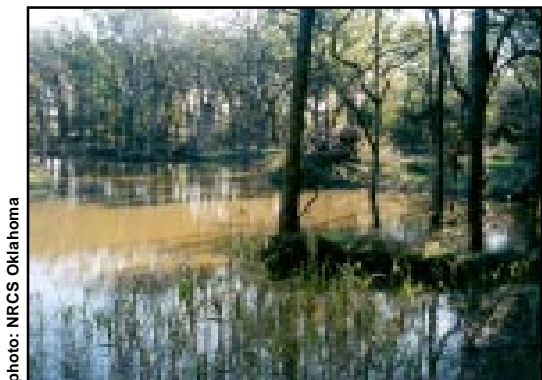


photo: NRCS Oklahoma

Water control structure was installed and planted to provide a food source for waterfowl.

Love County, Oklahoma landowner, Dennis Barnes, has 80 acres that have become a haven for wildlife. Barnes constructed two ponds with structures for water control, which allows the fluctuation of water levels. These ponds rely on runoff water to fill them and are planted with Japanese millet, providing a food source for waterfowl. Mallards, canvasback and teal have already been attracted. The open areas were seed to native grasses and trees were planted for wildlife food and habitat cover. The Barnes family enjoys the benefit of deer, turkey, quail and waterfowl that now make this property their home.

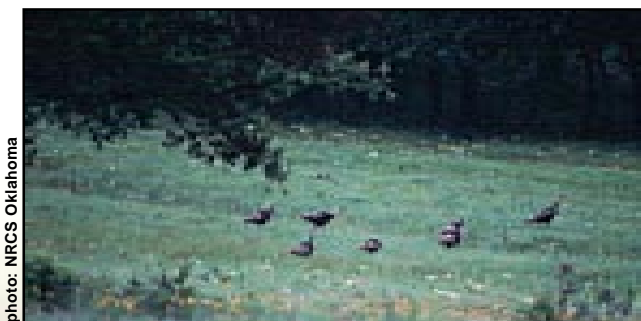


photo: NRCS Oklahoma

Wildlife habitat has been improved in Adair County, Oklahoma, by controlled burning, water development, and opening enhancements. Landowner and Wildlife Incentives Program participant Billy Quinton said, "This program has helped me immensely in the improvement of my land for deer, turkey, and other wildlife."

Landowner Scott Deatherage has planted over 4,000 tree and shrub seedlings as well as constructed a pond with a water control device on his 81 acres north of El Reno, Oklahoma. "Scott has done an outstanding job



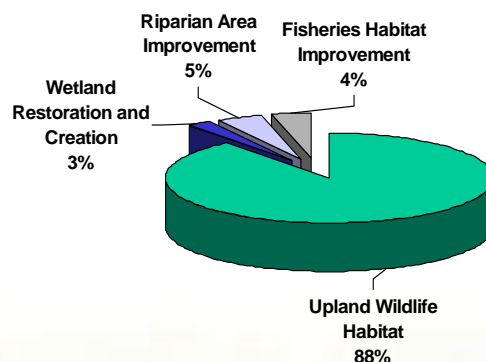
photo: NRCS Oklahoma

District Conservationist Duane Crider and landowner Scott Deatherage assess the tree/shrub plantings.

of wildlife habitat development and management," says Duane Crider, District Conservationist in El Reno. "I saw five coveys of quail on the farm this fall" Deatherage says.

Landowners like this are what make a difference in the quality of our environment that we will one day pass along to our children.

Distribution of WHIP Dollars



WHIP Applications

